

EASLEY (E.T.)

ARGUMENT

IN FAVOR OF A

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACT.

ITS PRESENT STATE.

BY

E. T. EASLEY, A. M., M. D.,

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS.

FROM THE OCTOBER NO. RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL.

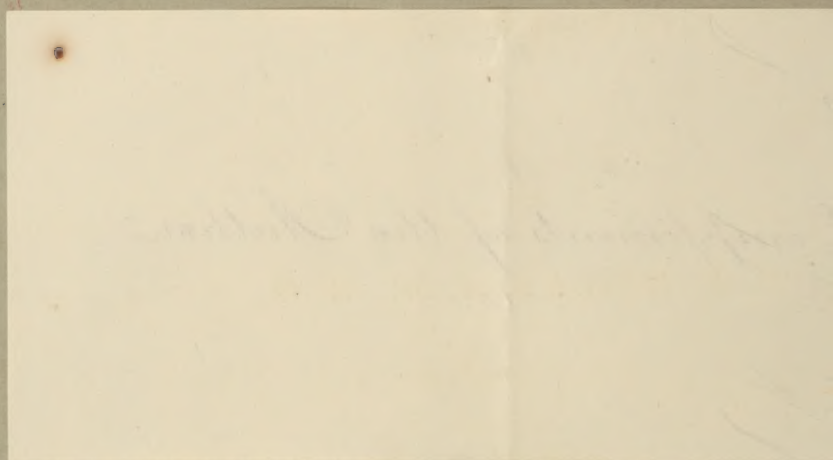


LOUISVILLE, KY.:

RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL BOOK AND JOB STEAM PRINT,
104 Green Street, 2d door west of Post-office.

1876.

Compliments of the Author.



ARGUMENT

IN FAVOR OF A

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACT.

ITS PRESENT STATE.

BY

E. T. EASLEY, A. M., M. D.

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS.

FROM THE OCTOBER NO. RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL



LOUISVILLE, KY.:

RICHMOND AND LOUISVILLE MEDICAL JOURNAL BOOK AND JOE STEAM PRINT,

104 Green Street, 2d door west of Post-office.

1876.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACT.

No body of men have labored more zealously or been more persistently ignored than those who have urged an effort to limit the spread of venereal diseases by enactments looking to the supervision of prostitution. Conspicuous for their learning, the earnestness of their convictions, and their devotion to scientific progress, they have been resisted and thwarted at every step. Fired upon front and rear and enfiladed, they have again and again been beaten back in every struggle to advance. So determined and unreasonable has been this opposition that it may be safely said, that nowhere has a contagious diseases act been put fairly to the test. The clergy and law-makers, confessedly incompetent to deal with the problem, have extended none, or a cheerless encouragement to those who have proposed a remedy. In a few instances only have they granted a tardy consent to the experiment. Acton, whose recent death was so sad a loss, devoted the most earnest work of the last years of his useful life to the investigation, and never ceased to insist on the large benefits to be secured by the compulsory examination and isolation of those diseased. Dr. Gross, by his inaugural address to the surgical section of the American Medical Association in 1874, has more prominently associated his name with the movement than any other American, and if the late address of my illustrious friend, Dr. Sims, had nothing else to redeem it from oblivion, it ought to live because in it he has taken such high ground on this very subject.

Many of us have watched the progress of this discussion with much solicitude, and have kept silent under almost a protest from our convictions of what is right. I am sure I but express a large public sentiment, both professional and lay, when I say the time has come to deal with the issue more decidedly than has yet been done. This necessity is upon us, and in view of the magnitude of the evil to be abated, may not be evaded.

That syphilitic diseases are enormously on the increase, and that, too, in their worst forms, does not need debate or illustration; the proposition will be admitted by all. Shall we, when our profession boasts so many recent triumphs, submit to the humiliating confession that nothing can be accomplished in this behalf? No subterfuge or argument can do away with the unpleasant facts involved; but the question of limiting the spread of contagious venereal diseases will intrude itself upon us incessantly, and in all candor we may well ask those who object to what has been proposed to offer us a remedy of their own. This is just what they have failed to do, and so the agitation in this country has been carried on most unprofitably.

The language of Dr. Kennard, of St. Louis,* in reference to the registration law of that city, presents a melancholy picture of the blindness of its opponents, and fitly portrays the great results that might have been achieved, and the difficulties that were encountered. "The law was a very excellent one. We were about to stamp out syphilis, and we had a quiet city. I have examined about 11,000 women, and ought to know something about the subject, and to have some data on which to base my opinions, and I repeat that we can stamp out syphilis; that we did stamp it out. The women supported the work themselves by weekly contributions, but through the fanaticism of old women, preachers, and I am sorry to say a few doctors, they succeeded finally in inducing our Legislature to abolish the law. And what has been the consequence? At this time in St. Louis you can not walk half a dozen blocks without being invited to come in. Such scenes as occur to-day in St. Louis would not have been tolerated during the existence of this law."

An antagonism as resolute has met this vanguard of reformers not only with us but in Great Britain and on the continent. And now, how can the women who concerned themselves so injudiciously in London and in St. Louis, the ministers who should have helped us, but who, instead, have launched their philippics against every *scheme to protect society* or redeem the Magdalene, how, it is demanded, can these be called philanthropists in any true sense of the appellation? Heaven forbid that we

* Trans. Amer. Med. Association, 1875, p. 238.

should encourage a depreciation of either class. There is no room in our hearts for any such feeling. If their impulses are strong and often imprudent, we know also that their convictions are honest. What we object to is the superficial character of their conclusions and the inadequate information upon which they determine an issue of such dimensions. But these people must be taught that there is a great wrong, a widespread source of misery; nay, the problem of the age to be met, and that if they are not prepared to grapple with this problem effectually, they ought at least to be silent and cease to indulge in innocent resolutions or pernicious declamation.

An abolition leader was accustomed to say that that party never got effectively to work until it had educated a generation to hate slavery. Now, if the onus is upon us of educating a generation to perceive the necessity of supervising prostitution with a view to arresting the spread of a loathsome malady, it is time we were about the work, and that in earnest. It is apprehended that we have not yet reached that point in the discussion when the question shall become one of details in regard to the proposed enactment, and a great deal of needless anxiety is exhibited and wasted as to its provisions. Of course, when we descend to the minutiae of any plan that may be suggested, many inconveniences and difficulties will be encountered; but it is safe to assert that as our experience of the operation of the law enlarges, these will be found surmountable. At any rate, it is not the part of wisdom to enlist our energies against troubles which are imaginary or far in the future; but our plain duty is, in a straightforward and direct way, to do the best we can with our present surroundings. What is required of medical men now is to acquit themselves of their responsibility in this regard, and to show in a practical way that they mean to do something. Let the move but be made, and that with a resolution to succeed, and we may with confidence look to time to correct the errors incident to the beginning of all important enterprises.

Those who are not inclined to do anything, who prefer that matters should go on in the fearful channels they now pursue, and who oppose us on the very threshold of our designs, say among

other things, with a great show of being plausible, that no system of surveillance that may be devised can be made to include all prostitutes, and that a large number will constantly escape the most rigid registration. It must be confessed that there is some truth in a statement of this sort. It is not probable that any system of registration, however inflexibly maintained, will ever be so perfect as to comprehend every offending woman, but it is almost certain that in time those who avoided registration would be a very insignificant number. But the argument will lose nothing if we grant all that is claimed in this objection; for we may answer these gentlemen pertinently and conclusively by asking, if we can not do all that we wish, especially in the beginning, is it a reason why we should do nothing? On the contrary, ought not the fact to impress us more sensibly with the magnitude of the evil and the still greater consequence to result from its neglect? "Is not half a loaf better than no bread," was an interrogatory propounded last year in Louisville by Professor Gross, and one which was made in substance by Mr. Acton long ago.

We are often told there is a large class of clandestine prostitutes—shop-girls, bar-maids, beer-jerkers, milliners, and kept women, who are and who are likely to remain under any plan of regulation altogether beyond the reach of inspection, and that these persons propagate most syphilis. Frequently as it is made, there is more than one fallacy implied in a statement of this sort. In the first place, it is not true that these women disseminate a larger percentage of disease, or that they are affected with its worst forms to a greater extent than those who avowedly follow their infamous vocation. The fact is applicable to the clandestine prostitution of the continent, and the idea has been derived from its statistics, but fails in America simply because we have no corresponding class. It is to be remembered that these reports are mostly of relative value, and are to be taken as evidence of a beneficent influence on those who have been subjected to inspection, and as indicating the nature of the mischief when left to itself to work out its own malignant courses. Numerically, I am satisfied that they have been much overestimated. They are not to be compared, in this respect,

to that vast host of street-walkers and undisguised harlots toward whom we desire to direct the benign influence of a systematic inspection. Again, the secrecy with which their operations are carried on very much diminishes their liability to contract disease and to infect others of the transient or general community, and the men infected by them are for the most part able to obtain competent medical aid, so that the mischief done by these women is comparatively small. They are usually able to provide attention for themselves when they become sufferers. On the continent, a clandestine prostitute is understood to be a woman who lives by her person and has the address to withdraw herself from special police supervision and periodical examinations.

It may be stated, on the authority of Jaennel and other observers, that registration uniformly diminishes the number of clandestine prostitutes. Many who abandon their ranks report, some of them voluntarily, for enrollment, whilst others, through fear of the police, forsake a life of shame. These women are a part, but a very small part, of the out-lying stragglers of this great camp of iniquity. It is the amelioration of the condition of the main body with which we must first be concerned, and when these come to learn their real status, that they have not ceased to be the objects of the care of enlightened government; and more than all, that they can not be permitted to scatter wide the seeds of disease and death unhindered, the others will be still further restricted in their immoral acts, or surrender at discretion to a judicious supervision.

It is the common, open, notorious prostitute upon whom we wish to lay our hands and bring to bear the strong arm of the law, and when this is done, undoubtedly we shall be able to modify or get rid of the larger and most dangerous part of the mischief. The lower we go down in the social scale, the more harmful does syphilis become; for it is among the indigent classes that negligence, uncleanness, inadequate food and clothing, and other causes favorable to the development of its worst forms are most rife. In a word, the sanitary condition of these people is always a degraded one. They show but little resistance to disease of any kind, and so with them syphilis soon in-

vades the deeper structures or takes on a phagædenic and rapidly destructive character. Clandestine prostitution often assumes a different, if not higher, level than that of mere bargain and sale. The promptings of desire or affection enter not seldom as elements of the crime. But the great mass of these unfortunate women receive no pleasure from sexual intercourse, and fail to share the gratification they afford at a price. With them it is a question of subsistence, of bread, of keeping the gaunt wolf of starvation at bay, and no law could be acceptable that while it healed her maladies, did not also suggest a legitimate means by which she might live, if she was inclined to abandon her disreputable course, and make an effort to retrace her steps toward respectability.

It is folly, the worst sort of folly, that which exhausts itself on trifles to talk about who can or should be controlled, when the fact is, we are not controlling anybody, and vice and disease go on, for all our fuss, as they always have done, and unrestrained. Let us rather go to work, and subject to inspection that large number readily accessible, trusting, as we securely may, that enlarged experience will extend the sphere of our usefulness. Every one knows that the partial recognition of prostitution now in vogue by periodical descents on its haunts is the merest farce, so far as any restraining influence is concerned, and worse than a farce to the blackmailed unfortunates. Surely, such puerile and tyrannical recourses on the part of the authorities are only less iniquitous than the evil against which they are directed.

That a contagious diseases law is practicable, has been sufficiently demonstrated, and we have reason to believe that much more may be accomplished under its operation than has hitherto been done. But let it not be supposed that we have underestimated the difficulties inherent to the subject; it is confessed that these are very great. Many men are, I am satisfied, too hopeful of immediate results. Dr. Sims, for instance, is doubtless far too sanguine. Syphilis can not be quarantined out of existence, any more than can the swift-winged winds or the great gulf-stream. It is not one thing that is to be done, but many. A system is to be inaugurated of vast ramifications

and elaborate details. I know no undertaking that will require more profound thought in the inception, or protracted labor in the execution. The early fruits of the movement will hardly be commensurate with the expense of time, patience, and material resources employed; but as sure as they are well directed and persistent, a rich reward will ultimately crown our exertions. Time will be on this subject as on many others where important interests are at stake—the great teacher—nothing can supply its operation, and nothing make void its developments. The divinities of to-day may be the false gods of to-morrow, and what is now denounced as innovation and heresy, we may yet live to see lauded high on the hills of everlasting truth. To that agency, then, which corrects so many errors, which explains so many motives misconstrued, we may in all charity and patience consign the task of putting all men right upon this subject. If we mistake not very much the animus of the age, it will not be very long before government will cease to think it beneath its dignity to care so much for the welfare of its subjects as to throw restraints around the most terribly infectious disease that afflicts them.

The question of limiting the spread of syphilis should command as much the attention of the educated physician as ventilation, disinfection, sewerage, or any other sanitary measures. That government and the philanthropist should be interested in the ravages of syphilis as they are in the progress of small-pox, typhoid and yellow fevers, cholera, and other such diseases is equally clear. State Boards of Health betray great anxiety in regard to thorough and systematic vaccination, and yet fail to take cognizance of the fact that vast numbers perish from a disorder as preventable and infinitely more intractable than small-pox. I ask, is this reasonable; is it just? The answer is, that it is neither just to the State, whose wealth consists in a vigorous population, nor to the individual, to whom health is not only happiness, but the means of obtaining money and subsistence. In every civilized country on the globe, lunatics are withdrawn from the community and treated at the charge of the State, as much for the protection of the public, as through motives of benevolence to the afflicted. Upon identically the same

principle it is claimed that syphilitics should be isolated. It may appear at first sight a little singular that more has not been attained toward reducing the number of vicious women and the consequent spread of the disease, when so much has been attempted by the clergy and good people of both sexes. The very fact that little indeed has been done is the most striking commentary possible on the inadequacy of this sort of work. We have had midnight and noonday missions; institutions designed for reformatories have been established; tracts have been widely distributed, and sermons preached at the Five Points in New York, at Lafayette street in Louisville, at Smoky Row in Nashville, and other disreputable localities in the large cities. Now and then a soiled dove has been lifted up from the mire, her feet placed on the granite, and if her reclamation is permanent and has any significance, she represents one less in the cohorts of sin; one less as a probable nidus of disease abstracted from the seething mass.

This is all very well and commendable as far as it goes, but the misfortune is that it does not go far enough. They must have but an imperfect conception of the gigantic proportions of the evil to be mitigated who hope in any such way to effect anything of substantial import. That a certain amount of good is wrought by these means is undoubtedly true, and if people are willing to give their time and money for the sake of obtaining good results, however small, not a word will be said to dissuade them or in any way to retard their efforts, with which I am in full sympathy. I can not, however, allow my sympathy to blind my judgment, and I repeat that midnight meetings and such measures are unlikely to be productive of satisfactory results, because they can not effectually reach the large body of prostitutes to whose benefit the efforts of the philanthropist should be directed, and the results are, after all, but microscopical in comparison with the labor and money bestowed.

The reason seems to be obvious. "A gigantic evil," says Mr. Acton, "can not be removed by private, irregular, and unsystematic efforts. A little tinkering here and there may here and there produce a little good, but the advantage obtained is accidental, partial, and transitory." Hereafter, the historian of

our times may say truly of our paroxysmal and desultory devices :

" The ways
Were filled with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done, redressed a random wrong."

We have been shooting at a venture, " fishing with lines when we ought to have been using nets," leaving to scattered, good-meaning individuals, with a poor idea of its magnitude, work which should constitute the highest duty, and demand the concentrated action of the State. What we want now, above all, is a well-considered, combined, and systematic effort in the execution of a definite and generally acceptable plan of procedure.

If we are really in earnest in our desires to do good in this direction, we can not do better than begin with a fair apprehension of the fixed and irrepressible nature of the evil to be encountered. From the earliest ages of the world, from a period of time so remote that truly the "memory of man runneth not to the contrary," the daughters of shame have dwelt among men, their frightful traffic has been sustained and its appalling consequences have cursed the fairest parts of the earth. The camp and court, rich and poor, the peasant and the priest, and crowned heads have all supplied their victims to Circe's nefarious blandishments. Ever and anon the finer feelings and the better natures of good men have protested, and they have risen up to make headway against the deepening, widening sea of corruption. They have said, we will banish the prostitutes; the women who sell their bodies and make society rotten with their iniquity shall not dwell among us. And what has been the result? It is briefly told; alas! that it should be written, the remedy has proven more harmful than the disease for which it was applied. The enormous crimes of seduction, illegitimacy, criminal abortion, and infanticide have followed in the wake of every effort to suppress prostitution. It is a melancholy and unpalatable fact, but one which those who entertain Arcadian notions on the subject may as well understand at once, that such enterprises present only an unbroken record of failure. The city of Berlin offers one of the most conspicuous

among many examples of the utter futility of suppressive measures. This great capital has, on as many as three occasions (in 1717, in 1796, and 1845) since the Reformation, been cleansed of prostitutes; but has, on each occasion, fallen a prey to desertion of infants, adultery, clandestine prostitution, and other disasters more terrible than those for which relief was sought. Of the last attempt, we are informed "the licensed houses (twenty-six) were closed despite the remonstrances of the police department, and their three hundred inhabitants banished, as well as all other females, without ostensible means of support. But unnatural offenses, self-abuse, secret prostitution, and illegitimate births became so common, and syphilis so much more than ever severe and frequent that General von Wrangel was induced to make a forcible appeal on behalf of the army's health against the quasi improved order of things. The number of females who entered the public hospital had risen from 627 and 761 to 835, and that of the males from 711 in the year 1845 to 979 in the year 1848."

It is impossible to believe, then, that we can do away with prostitution altogether. It is no transitory evil, and it is worse than foolish to shut our eyes to facts. Accepting the proposition, which surely does not need further illustration, that the evil must always exist, it can yet be materially lessened, and its consequences, so far as they relate to the public health, vastly diminished. We can not, it must be conceded, coërcé people into leading virtuous lives, but we can compel them to submit to inspection, to isolation and care when diseased, and so protect humanity from the ravages of their unclean disorders. Although prostitution can not be repressed absolutely, it is a thing to be restrained within certain bounds and subjected to a wholesome control and supervision. By a contagious diseases act, we say to the women in effect, "you can not be prevented from following this sad career which you have chosen; we would force you to abstain from vice, but we can not; but we can and will take care that your shameful lives shall no longer work injury to the health of others or outrage public decency. You have no right, by any possible construction, to inflict a loathsome and deadly malady on the unhappy victims of your allurements, and you shall not."

So we come around again to the question, what is to be done with this abomination, injurious, utterly sinful and imperishable? Let us devote a little more time to a consideration of the actual attitude in which the question is presented. It is manifest enough from what has been said, and from what all men know to be true, that the ills engendered by prostitution are two-fold, moral and physical. If the moral mischiefs only were to be considered, or alone followed in its train, the whole subject would be placed beyond the domain of legislation, for, as I have already stated, people can not be made honest or virtuous by any act of the General Government, State or Municipal authority, any more than their chancres can be healed by reading tracts, or their hungry bellies satisfied with listening to sermons. In other words, the moral results of the evil must be met in one way, in a way appropriate to them, the physical consequences on the other hand can only be treated by physical measures. We are in thorough accord with all rational means for elevating the depraved moral status of this unfortunate class, and no plan of registration would be tolerated that did not have such a design prominently in view; for every reason of expediency and right, let those pious people who strive to lift Aspasia up to a purer atmosphere, a better life, be encouraged, for they are, in many cases, the salt of the earth in a corrupt age. What the exigency of the matter demands, however, is coöperative work.

Our Profession can and will bring to the task a large number of experts—its best talent—men of pure hearts, devotion to scientific progress and enthusiasm for the enterprise. If they are but sustained by those from whom they have a right to expect help, incalculable good will be accomplished. The educated, arduous, and self-denying efforts, without adequate compensation or approval, displayed by our Profession to prevent the deterioration of the race through the spread of syphilis entitle us to require of government increased facilities for dealing with it. It is a foul blot upon the intelligence and Christianity of the century that we are considering; it can not be left to itself, severely let alone, with any prospect of its growing less disfiguring. On the contrary, its constant tendency is

downward, and to diminish it or render more tolerable its horrid features, requires all the redeeming and healing influences that can be brought to bear upon it. I need not pause to present the unhappy career of the prostitute, her short life of fictitious gaiety and real misery, and her shameful, hopeless death; this has been done by Parent-Duchatelet, Alphonse Esquiros, Jaennel and others, in language so graphic that the picture is painfully vivid. It is enough to say that through every degradation of soul and body from St. James to St. Giles, her course downward is rapid and almost universally taken. Nor are we at present particularly concerned with the causes of prostitution, although unquestionably they may be much reduced. These causes are multitudinous, and may be conveniently divided into artificial, local and individual causes, which create a lawless demand, and which furnish an infamous supply among them. Not to dwell on this head, let us mention extreme poverty, indolence, vicious inclinations, indisposition or inability, real or supposed, for marriage, and the heinous offense seduction. To this black list may be added the bad effect of what Dr. E. S. Gaillard has characterized, with appropriate severity, the hotel plan of living, adopted so largely by families who ought to have homes.* Now these are the points that mostly challenge the efforts of the philanthropist and churchman, in which their efforts seconding a judicious surveillance may reap rich fruits, not indeed by a discussion of the issues in the abstract, or alone by discourses against the enormity of the sin, but by substantial improvements in the sanitary condition and moral associates of the young of the lower orders. It is a patent fact, and can not be denied, that prostitution is to many of these women only a transition state; repulsive and dishonorable as is their vocation, they do not, all of them, go down to the grave in their base career. On the contrary, vast numbers of

* This veteran journalist and accomplished lecturer has, to my knowledge, made occasion annually for years to direct the attention of the Profession and large classes of students to the mischievous tendency of the American habit of congregating families in hotels and boarding-houses. The salutary and restraining influences of home-life are not only lost to the young, but indolence, early dissipation and immoral associations are the results of a system so pernicious.

them after having tasted the bitter pleasures of a shameful life emerge from the depths into a better walk, a quasi-respectability. They frequently become the wives of tradesmen and men of means and position in society. In the interests of the race, the State and the general community, it is an obvious duty to preserve sound the bodies of as many of them as we may.

Supervision, the belief has been expressed, will lessen the number of both open and clandestine prostitutes, and for this there is an obvious reason. However low a woman may have sunk, her downward steps were not all made at once; though rapid, they were gradual; however lost, she was once pure, at any rate there was a time when she had not actually fallen. Now many girls would be deterred from entering upon such a career if they knew that it would subject them to registration and render them conspicuous to the whole community. This is true of women on the verge of an abandoned life, while as to the hardened offender she regards the measure as the case may be, with favor or with indifference. She has seldom been known to oppose any decided objection to the law, and so far from wishing to evade it, oftener than otherwise, she soon recognizes its advantages. That women will be really or in their own estimation more debased by registration and regular inspection, is "a dagger of the mind" which may frighten some, but with those most familiar with the habits of thought and life of the prostitute it can have little effect. Surely if the women realize that from being utterly ignored they have come to be the objects of government and individual solicitude, their self-respect must improve, and while her physical welfare is promoted, frequent examinations will present constantly the salutary contrast between virtue and vice, between a life of respectability and one in every way degraded. I honestly believe that such would be the result, and it is but serious trifling to assert that women, whose bodies are free to all the world and who are so lost to decency as to consort with numbers of men the same night, would be scandalized by the manipulations of the surgeon. I hope we will not hear anything more, even from the most democratic, about the infringement of individual liberty by com-

pulsory examination. "They talk, sir," says Dr. Guthrie, "of the liberty of the subject. Let no man confound the liberty of the subject with license and licentiousness, and I hold that the worst enemy of liberty is he who does so confound them, and after all, what is this liberty but wanton license? It is not freedom but lawless indulgence." The principle which justifies and renders necessary such an enactment is one upon which all good government is founded; it is that for the common good every individual must be restricted to a certain extent of personal freedom; that is, that he must give up for the social benefit a moiety of liberty to do just as he pleases. No doctrine can be clearer than that the State has the right, and ought to exercise it, of preventing the individual from inflicting disease and death on his fellow-citizen. I have already alluded to the visionary character of the idea that prostitution will ever be extirpated. If there are those who will labor to this end, we bid them God speed; but until that good hour arrives we ask not to be deterred from limiting and mitigating its appalling consequences.

It has been urged by those who oppose any measures of surveillance that registration and regular examination offer a fictitious security to the indulgence of unlawful intercourse, in short, that it is placing a premium on crime. Nobody who has ever read it can forget the eloquent and indignant manner in which this charge was repelled by Mr. Acton, when made by Mr. Simon (in his report as Medical Officer of the Privy Council) one of the grounds of his objection to the extension of the contagious diseases act to the civil population in England. Whilst the percentage of syphilis has uniformly grown less, it is not true, as assumed in this proposition, that prostitution has increased under the operation of these acts on the continent. This argument almost reached an absurdity when Dr. Andrews gravely informed us,* by way of illustrating the insufficiency of the French laws, that of four young men who crossed the Atlantic with him, one to his "own certain knowledge" contracted syphilis in Paris. It does seem that this is a very large deduction from small premises, and it is hoped the gentleman does not wish us to believe that his gay young friends were really in

* Transactions American Medical Association, 1875, page 235.

more danger of disease on account of an effort having been made to keep the women clean. The truth is, and the lesson of such examples this, the laws are not perfect, and much labor may yet be bestowed on them to advantage. If they who perpetrated fornication were the only ones to suffer, there might be some force in this reasoning, and formal moralists might be so indifferent to the pains of the erring as to withhold all prophylaxis. But in this case, to an extraordinary extent, are the "sins of the fathers visited upon the children," and the number of the innocent who are sorely afflicted is almost incredible. I am constrained to present the following table, which exhibits better than any language can do the startling but indisputable fact that the greatest mortality exists among children under one year of age. It was issued by the Registrar-General.

Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age from Syphilis in the Year 1868.

AGE.	ENGLAND AND WALES.	LONDON.
Under one year.....	1,364	361
One and under two years.....	82	21
Two and under three years.....	19	2
Three and under four years.....	6	2
Four and under five years.....	1	...
Total under five years.....	1,472	386

Verily the slaughter of the innocents is still going on, and by a foe still more inexorable than the old king who pursued them from the garrets of the great city to the caves of the wilderness. Shall they not be spared? Do they deserve no mercy at our hands?

Let it not be supposed by even the most unsophisticated that syphilis comes as a retribution for sin. Does not he who has grown hoary in iniquity, whose life is a history of licentiousness, escape, whilst the stripling, still the subject of maternal anxiety, falls, and in his first offense contracts disease to become a mass of rottenness? Every one who has visited large hospitals knows that it is so. Does not the countryman who has never before wandered from the marriage bed of his rural home, overtaken in liquor it may be, fall a prey to the harlot's seductions, and take to his honest wife the most detestable of all maladies? Yet we are told that sin brings in this life a large share of its

own punishment, and that in this instance the retribution is syphilis. Ah! my masters take not that "flattering unction to your souls" as an excuse for refusing to join an enterprise to relieve the ills of our poor humanity, or to evade an answer to the old question still thundering in the ears of the philanthropist—"am I my brother's keeper?" Let us here make a proper distinction. It is not concubinage, promiscuous fornication, adultery, or any form of illicit intercourse which necessarily propagates syphilis, but it is connection (and too often the commerce is lawful) with the infected. Before proceeding, let the views of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, who has long opposed the extension of the Contagious Diseases Act in London, be presented. "The argument respecting retribution for sin which has had most weight with ministers is an untenable one. I believe that I should be guilty of a pious fraud if I told any young man that he would inevitably incur the punishment if he yielded to the temptation. I believe that I should be injuring his conscience, both by the falsehood and by setting before him a low motive for abstinence, and I know not where the application of such a maxim could stop. Is gout not to be treated medically when it is proved to be the result of gluttony, or madness when it can be traced directly to drunkenness. Strike at the cause by all the moral influences you can use, but the effects ought to come under the cognizance of the physician."

The objections which have been urged, it may be remarked, apply for the most part particularly to the systems of regulation suggested, and not to the principle involved. That principle concerns not the government or State alone, but every separate household in the community, for the disorder in its visitations is unmindful of caste or social position, and if it made such distinction anywhere the barrier could not stand under institutions so very democratic, where heredity is unknown, and society's classifications intermix, amalgamate and lose their distinctive features in every new generation. Why, madam, your fair boy, the darling object of your care, whose virtuous mind you think can entertain no impure thought, will go away from you to be more sadly afflicted than he who fell among thieves on the way to Jericho; and as in that case so in this, the Priest

and Levite will "go by on the other side." Can it be wrong that we call on the Profession by every motive of personal and public interest to join a crusade to disenthral the fallen and to cleanse their foul persons? We have a good cause, many special pleas to present as its advocates, and may well appeal to society that it has a direct interest in reclaiming and in caring for the health of the prostitute. The commonwealth's interest in it is this: "That there is never one among all these whose partners in vice may not some day be the husbands of other women and fathers of American children, never one of them but may herself when the shadow is past become the wife of a citizen and the mother of his offspring, that multitudes of them are mothers before they become prostitutes, and other multitudes become mothers during their evil career. If the race of the people is of no concern to the State, then has the State no interest in arresting its vitiation. But if this concern and this interest be admitted, then arises the necessity for depriving prostitution not only of its moral but of its physical venom also."

As before intimated, it is not the purpose of this paper to enter into a discussion of details in reference to a plan of supervision. These require much thought and ought to be thoroughly digested when the time for action shall have arrived. Many good and competent men will then be found ready to submit the outlines of an enactment and mode of procedure as nearly perfect as with our present experience human wisdom could contrive. But the essential features of such a system may properly be mentioned. It must be based upon the idea that prostitution is imperishable as well as injurious and utterly abominable. And in the first place it must premise that nothing can be of any avail in arresting the dissemination of syphilis except the rigid, systematic and absolute segregation of the infected. The earliest and most obvious thing to be done is to render those diseased powerless to contaminate others, and this can only be accomplished by isolation and cure. Begin to subtract the diseased from the mass of the licentious, and syphilis must diminish; there can be no other rational conclusion. In proportion as the measure becomes general, to that extent will we have entered

upon the way, the only true way, of stamping out the malady. No plan of treating these women at their resorts or as out-patients will answer. While they are getting well they must be positively denied the deadly privilege of propagating their diseases. All will be impressed by what has been so forcibly said of the out-patient system of the London Hospitals. "Here you see a woman, who, patched up by voluntary charity in the morning, knows no other way; nay, whose only possible resource to get her necessary food, or bed at night, is to sally forth into the streets. The ministers of charity eased her pain this morning. They dressed her sores and gave her drugs. So they will again next Thursday. She may be worse then, or she may have made a little progress in spite of her drinking and her fornication, but in a month she will be no nearer soundness than had she been taken care of by the State within the walls of the hospital for one week, and within that month what a scourge upon society will the surgeons not have kept afoot by their exertions?"* No language could describe with more emphasis the extent of the mischief or the inadequacy of the measures which have been brought to bear upon it.

I hold that the Government is bound for its own sake, for that of the afflicted, and in the interests of the exposed community, to provide for the segregation and care of its pauper syphilitics, and that the provision should be as liberal as the demand, for it is pressing and extensive; further, that it is as much the duty of government to protect from preventable diseases the meanest of its subjects as it is to secure their civil and religious freedom within proper limitation, and to bestow upon the poor the medical care which the wealthy are able to obtain for themselves. The health of each individual is the great item in his productive capital, and of course an essential part of the gross national capital. If the citizen is sick, he not only fails to maintain himself, but becomes an element to swell the effect of unproductive consumption. It was an observation of the celebrated Junius, that "the ruin or prosperity of a State depends so much upon the administration of its government,

* Acton on Prostitution, London edition, 1870, p. 248.

that to be acquainted with the merit of a ministry, we need only observe the condition of the people."

While, as has been shown, we can not do otherwise than entrust to the moral sense of the individual participation in or abstinence from unlawful commerce, we can not delegate to private charity the alleviation of its concomitant evils. These people can not be successfully addressed in masses, the appeal must be to the personal conscience and accountability, and compulsory restriction on unsanitary conduct must be placed on the individual offender. We have also undertaken to show that no voluntary system of dealing with prostitution will answer; however unpleasant to our sensibilities, the fact of its existence and permanency must be accepted as it is presented, and then we are to labor to restrict its bounds, to limit its evils, and to relieve its deplorable results. A great deal is said of toleration, of recognition, of licensing; women are shocked when the subject is approached, and say how naughty it all is, and good-meaning men hold up their hands in pious horror, and refuse to admit any but the Eutopian idea of suppression, and so we waste time in quibbling over terms and in sentiment, while work that we ought to be about is left undone. It is said that government is bound to admit the existence of the evil only to the extent and for the purpose of making an effort to suppress it. I have tried to explain rationally and from the sad examples of those nations that have made the trial the utter hopelessness of such an undertaking. And why after all this dread of recognition by the State? Why should government fail to perceive a state of affairs known of all men, open and notorious? Why is the State required to be blind to what everybody sees? Is the power that alone can correct a mischief that all lament alone to refuse recognition? Individual effort misdirected and unorganized can never cure her diseases or reform the prostitute. The mass of evil will not be rendered less odious than it now is by such interference, and combined, concentrated effort approved and directed by authority can only, it is firmly believed, stay the frightful march of the deadly disorder. Let us not bandy words about what we shall call our system. Call it recognition, licensing, legalizing,

what you will, so that we only go to work in pursuance of some feasible, rational and systematic plan, backed by authority, to execute its provisions. Our opponents may characterize our operations as suits them; in this case at least there is little in a name, and it will not do to be alarmed at shadows. It is the principle for which we are contending, the great principle that government is obligated in this instance, as in others, to protect society from the effects of the wrong-doing of the individual. Applied in the present discussion, the principle is that the State must recognize the evil just as it is, and provide measures of sanitary control. Those measures, to be of any avail, must contemplate as to the syphilitic early detection, compulsory isolation, detention and cure.

I have elsewhere shown* that the negro race is rapidly perishing by specific diseases, and that the still-births and infant mortality from this source are appalling. The facts in their history prove that prior to the war, on account of the restrictions opposed to their licentiousness, the early detection and prompt treatment of their diseases, venereal disorders were almost unknown among them. No argument could more persuasively declare the benefits to be derived from a humane and intelligent supervision. The unprecedented effort of the present party in power to elevate the social status of these people is a matter of history. The blood and treasure of the nation have flowed freely in their behalf, and it is fair to say that no people were ever the objects of so much government solicitude. These efforts included the disastrous policy of making at once the vast stride from slavery to full-fledged citizenship. They have been peculiarly the "wards of the nation," yet they are more indolent, licentious and diseased than ever before, and mar the sanitary records of all the large Southern cities. Why, it may be asked, are they now ignored in the respect which most especially concerns their very existence as a race? Let the government, we have a right to insist in the interests of common humanity, be true to itself and consistent. The power which freed the slave, made him ostensibly the social peer of his master, is still pledged

*American Medical Weekly, July 31, 1875. Art. "The Sanitary Condition of the Negro."

to make him its especial care. Let it then heal his physical unsoundness, restrain his abandoned modes of life, and save, as it well may, scores of his offspring from death. A pseudo-philanthropy does not become the times. We have learned to distinguish oily gammon from the real utilitarian. The duty of government is dictated by a necessity as unbending as that which declares the responsibility of the subject.

No one denies that the enactments already in force across the water are very far from perfect, but should we not learn wisdom from their deficiencies, improve upon their shortcomings rather than complain and do nothing at all? The partial failure (if it be admitted) of the venereal diseases act to accomplish, in some localities, all that was desired does not affect the principle at stake, or render less urgent the necessity for continued action. In this connection it may be mentioned as a remarkable and significant fact, that the great mass of opposition has come from the unprofessional and uninformed, whilst physicians and those charged with the execution of the acts have been their steadfast advocates. The medical press in Europe has contended nobly in their defence, and against reasoning of the weakest and most prejudiced character. They have enlisted in their support such a number of distinguished names on the continent as probably no other important measure of reform has ever won in so short a time. Among them Strohl, Behrend, Jaennel, Mayer, Ryan, Acton, and Lagneau have come to the front in demonstrating the practicability of the contagious diseases act and the good results already attained. The scope of the present paper will not allow anything like a review of the results of the police regulation of prostitution in Europe. The statistics, carefully prepared, abundantly show that great good has been achieved, and they have not been invalidated. After all that has been said about the inefficiency of the French system, the unyielding fact remains that the proportion of venereal diseases in the army and navy of that nation is much smaller than in countries where nothing has been done to supervise the social evil. Legislation in France extends to the civil as well as military population, and embraces in its provisions the sailor, soldier, citizen, and

prostitute. It has been affirmed that the annual expense thus incurred was no less than £156,000, and a well-known English surgeon declared in 1870, "we must admit that venereal diseases are nearly four times more common among our troops than they are among the French." The Belgian and Prussian regulations, when their statistics are properly interpreted, have likewise presented the most gratifying results. As a consequence of regulation by the State, among others established, these propositions may be safely asserted: 1. Clandestine prostitution has diminished. 2. The diseases have assumed a milder character, and the average period of stay in hospital has been correspondingly reduced. 3. Unregistered or clandestine prostitutes are affected most frequently and with the severer forms of syphilis. It has been shown that at Bordeaux the proportion of registered women found diseased has never exceeded 18 per 1,000 during the last eight years, while of the clandestine prostitutes a third or even half were found diseased, both at Bordeaux and Rotterdam. 4. It is demonstrated that the average number of men in military service diseased has become much less than formerly—that the women themselves exhibit a better sanitary condition, greater cleanliness and self-respect than ever before, and that many of them are annually reclaimed. 5. The forms of disease most diminished and modified are those in which society in general is most concerned, namely, the syphilitic. In this way we reach the conclusion that toleration, repugnant as it appears, is the less of the two inevitable evils. In contradistinction to these statements no contrast can be more striking than the social condition of those capitals that have refused recognition and supervision. In the renowned capital of sunny, classical Italy, the land of story and of song, of heroes, poets, and beautiful women, prostitution has never been tolerated in any sense by either Church or State, and here, as elsewhere, the disastrous rule of suppression has worked untold mischief, and rendered prostitution and the worst forms of disease all-pervading. Dr. Jocquet, who, with large opportunities, has studied the subject well, classifies five shapes of clandestinity, and the details of crime and disease are too revolting to be dwelt upon by even the mind accustomed to contemplate

the worst forms of depravity. "It has been called the most licentious city in Europe," writes Bayard Taylor of Stockholm, "and I have no doubt with the most perfect justice. Very nearly half the registered births are illegitimate, to say nothing of the illegitimate children born *in* wedlock. I have never seen any place where licentiousness was so open and avowed, and yet where the slang of a sham morality was so prevalent. There are no houses of prostitution in Stockholm; the city would be scandalized at the idea of allowing such a thing. A few years ago two were established, and the fact was no sooner known than a virtuous mob arose and violently pulled them down."* Such facts as these speak for themselves. They are so voluminous and decisive that no comment could enhance their value.

The operation of the contagious diseases act of the British Government, passed in 1866, has been the subject of protracted discussion; much of it conducted in a spirit of fairness, but much of it, unfortunately, characterized by that other disposition so deplorable, of misconception and crimination. A ladies' association has been formed, and issued an appeal against the measure, singular only for its entire want of logic and utter ignorance of the subject. An Anti-contagious Diseases Act Society has been for some time in existence, which, in the plenitude of its sympathy for our benighted condition, has sent over missionary lecturers to harangue the public of our large cities in warning from the errors of their own misguided government. Now, these indiscreet exhibitions of feeling have really nothing to do with the merits of the question, and ought to be harmless; but the fact is, they do great injury in creating a vicious public opinion, and to this tribunal, whether or not enlightened, the issue must ultimately be referred. It is by facts and statistics that we are to be governed in educating public sentiment, and not by men's antipathies or preconceived notions; and when subjected to the most rigid investigation by this standard, the act has again and again come off triumphant.

Very recently, Surgeon-General Balfour, who was for many years at the head of the Statistical Branch of the Medical De-

*Northern Travels. London. 1873.

partment of the Army, defended the returns issued by the Department, forcibly observing that "the figures, whilst he had the management of the Branch, were certainly not manufactured to suit his convictions, but that his convictions had been coerced by the figures."

"The opponents of the acts," says the "Medical Times and Gazette," "are evidently at their wit's end for means wherewith to keep the opposition alive. The latest manœuvre has been to engage the services of a French lecturer."

As early as 1870 the Committee of Investigation appointed by the House of Commons reported thus favorably: "Although the act has only been in operation a year and a half, and at some stations only seven months, strong testimony is borne to the benefits both in a moral and sanitary view which have resulted from it. Prostitution appears to have diminished; its worst features to have softened, and its physical evils to have been abated." In the *letter of the Devonport surgeons to the Lords of the Admiralty*, a conclusion is asserted which has been before stated as demonstrable of venereal diseases acts in other countries. "The real fact is that it is *precisely those forms of disease in which society is most interested*—namely, syphilis—which have been most beneficially influenced by the system of inspection now in practice, and that it is on the slighter and less important forms that the least impression has been made. The percentage of syphilis has steadily diminished."

Some of the most satisfactory proofs of the benefits secured in the protected stations are to be found enumerated in Dr. Park's well-known work on Hygiene, where the whole subject is handled in a most careful and admirable manner.

A strong contrast has been presented by Mr. Lane, Assistant Surgeon Grenadier Guards, of the cases of venereal diseases occurring in the same battalion in the same period of time, when stationed at Windsor, a protected, and at London, an unprotected barracks.*

* London Lancet, January 8, 1870.

Admissions for Venereal Diseases.

WINDSOR.		LONDON.	
March.....	11	September.....	17
April.....	6	October.....	29
May.....	6	November.....	23
June.....	7	December.....	39
Total.....	30	Total.....	108

"I may add," says Mr. Lane, "that formerly, before the contagious diseases act was put in force at Windsor, the number of cases admitted and the severity of the disease were greater at that station than at any other."

Any one may be satisfied of the benefits derived by the English troops from these acts through the very simple process of examining the statistics of enthetic diseases among them, and comparing the tables presented since the passage of the act with those for previous years.

When Sir J. Trelawny asserted that these acts were the most benevolent passed this century, he stated what he had ample opportunities of knowing, and when Dr. Brewer declared that more good had been done by them in three years than had been accomplished by the united efforts of the religious world in this direction, he stated a demonstrable fact.

The movement in America has been at the mercy of many temporary agencies, and its extent and design the subjects of continued misrepresentation. Unorganized itself, it has encountered persistent and systematic opposition, the latest feature of which, born of the Anti-contagious Diseases Act Society of England, has culminated in the "Moral Education Society of Philadelphia." The garbled pleas of this organization are such as characterize the manifestoes and philippics of the parent body, and contribute absolutely nothing to the discussion of the issue on the ground of either expediency or right. There is no disposition to deal harshly with these good-natured people. It is enough to say that their reasoning (if their homilies may be called so) is obnoxious to the faults of being one sided, of assuming that the acts are impracticable and offensive, and avoiding *experimentum crucis* of a reference to the results of their operation wherever enforced. Amid such undeserved opposition, it is pleasant to know that many of

our leading professional minds have urged a full and fair investigation, and that medical periodicals, like that great journal, the "Philadelphia Reporter," have manfully and steadfastly advocated sanitary control of contagious venereal diseases.

In 1875 a select committee was appointed by the Legislature of that State to investigate the causes of the increase of crime in the city of New York. These gentlemen did their work well. Their report was a voluminous and exceedingly valuable one. Among other important suggestions, they used this advanced and emphatic language in relation to the subject we have been considering: "Whatever may be the odium incurred by the suggestion among honest people who have not mingled with the world, who are ignorant of its passions and their fatal effects, the committee are willing to take it upon themselves in earnestly recommending to the Legislature the regulating or permitting, or if the word be not deemed offensive, the licensing of prostitution. In the interests of the well-being, the decorum, the decency of society; in the interest of peace and happiness of by far the greatest number of people; in the interest of the preservation of the purity of the guardians of the public peace; in the interest of the public health, and for the sake of thousands yet unborn, the committee earnestly urge upon the Legislature as the only means of grappling with the social evil, the granting to the police the power of regulation, of localization, and medical visitation."

It is right to say that these are not the words of men biased by prejudice or self-interest, but they are the utterances of a clear head and cool judgment, predicated on a most elaborate and painstaking investigation.

But little has been said of the extent of the evil we propose to mitigate. We assume that all informed on the subject will admit the universal distribution of syphilitic diseases and their baneful effect on the health standard of the race. When Mr. Simon, a few years ago, ventured to say that "very exaggerated opinions are current as to the diffusion and malignity of contagious diseases," such an array of statistics were at once produced by eminent syphilographers as soon convinced us that the half had not been told.

In response to an application at the Surgeon-General's Office, the following letter and tables were received, and it affords me pleasure to acknowledge my gratitude for the kind and prompt manner in which they were furnished :

WAR DEPARTMENT, SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
WASHINGTON, D. C., August 4, 1876. }

Dr. E. T. Easley :

Dear Sir,—The Surgeon-General has handed me your letter of July 24th for reply. Accordingly, I send you a table which gives the mean strength represented in the reports, the number of cases of syphilis, and the number of cases of gonorrhœa, for white and colored troops separately, for five years, from July 1, 1868, to June 30, 1873, inclusive. To obtain similar information from the Navy, you should apply to the Surgeon-General of the Navy.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

J. J. WOODWARD, Surgeon U. S. Army.

Number of Cases of Syphilis and Gonorrhœa among the White Troops in the U. S. Army from July 1, 1868, to June 30, 1873.

	Mean Strength.	Syphilis Cases.	Gonorrhœa Cases.
Year ending June 30, 1869.....	37,197	3,929	1,999
Year ending June 30, 1870.....	28,660	2,235	1,390
Year ending June 30, 1871.....	29,373	2,047	1,255
Year ending June 30, 1872.....	24,116	1,575	970
Year ending June 30, 1873.....	24,897	1,544	849

Number of Cases of Syphilis and Gonorrhœa among the Colored Troops in the U. S. Army from July 1, 1868, to June 30, 1873.

	Mean Strength.	Syphilis Cases.	Gonorrhœa Cases.
Year ending June 30, 1869.....	4,060	489	109
Year ending June 30, 1870.....	3,200	200	82
Year ending June 30, 1871.....	2,622	134	77
Year ending June 30, 1872.....	2,506	100	50
Year ending June 30, 1873.....	2,523	172	156

Doubtless these figures do not present all the truth ; yet, as far as they go, they represent an extent of disease much to be

deplored. The large and uniform preponderance of the ratio of cases of syphilis is a noticeable feature. Thus, in the first of the five years, 1869, we find the aggregate number of men so affected to be 4,418, more by nearly 400 than the entire number of colored troops in service. Now the concern which the law-maker, the statesman, and citizen have in all this is, that whereas the garrison prostitute and camp-follower contaminate the soldier, the latter, in his turn, retorts by infecting the civil population, and so the chain of contagion may be indefinitely protracted, the army being both its scape-goat and its focus of propagation. No part of the social fabric, no condition in life can claim exemption from its ravages. It reacts on all, and the contagion of to-day will descend to many generations. It was shown, thirty-five years ago, by a comparison of the Carlisle tables, and the ratio of mortality in the English armies, that the profession of arms during peace involved no greater risk of life than that which attends civil pursuits. It is doubtful if the facts would at present justify such a statement. That enthetic venereal diseases have been largely on the increase in the United States Army, may be seen at a glance from the following table, which I have condensed from the statistical reports of Surgeon-General Thomas Lawson, published in 1840:

Number of Cases of Syphilis occurring in the U. S. Army for the Ten Years, 1829 to 1838, inclusive.

	Mean Strength for 10 Years.	Syphilis Cases.	Gonorrhœa Cases.
Northern Division.....	22,240	462	971
Southern Division.....	24,979	584	929
Total.....	47,219	1,046	1,900

According to this view we have, in an aggregate strength for the ten years of 47,219, only 2,946 cases of venereal diseases. The grand total of all diseases treated during this period, I have ascertained, was 86,565. Only one of the cases tabulated above is recorded as fatal, and that a case of syphilis complicated with chronic diarrhœa. But the most obvious deduction,

and the one with which we are now chiefly concerned, is that venereal diseases are not only enormously on the increase in the service, but that it is their worst forms which have increased most; in fact, that the proportions have been reversed. The ratio of syphilis to gonorrhœa for the five years, 1869 to 1873, was as 2 to 1; whereas, in the ten years, 1829 to 1838, in a total of 2,946 cases of all venereal diseases, the cases of gonorrhœa were nearly 900 in excess.

It would be very easy to show that any considerable reduction of the number of venereal cases in the military forces would be a large economy to the nation. If there were no higher incentive, the cupidity of the Government (reform and retrenchment are so much talked of and so little practiced) ought to be a prevailing motive. Indubitably, it is a very expensive thing to sustain and treat thousands of syphilitics annually. It is undeniable too that the disease (not prostitution) can in a great degree be suppressed. Is it not marvellous that the Government continues the outlay and virtually asserts that it can do no more? Let us turn again to the facts, these at least are inexorable, inflexible, and it will not be disputed that regulation laws have always presented among their earliest benefits a striking modification of the severity of the disease, and a corresponding reduction of the period spent in hospital. A comparison of the condition and treatment of ordinary and government patients has shown results decidedly in favor of the latter in these particulars, to say nothing of the fact equally manifest, that the actual number of cases constantly diminishes.

There can be no just complaint against the periodical examination of the civil prostitute on the ground as speciously alleged in a late popular journal* of class legislation, of discriminating in favor of the male. Men do not make a business of and live by illicit intercourse, they do not offer and advertise their bodies for purposes of prostitution; women do, they provide apartments and facilities, resort to insinuation, allurements, and open solicitation to entrap the unwary or vicious of the opposite sex; in a word, to augment the earnings of their unhappy vocation. Men were never known to be deterred from unlawful commerce

by the fear of contagion, their inclinations and their ability to gratify them have fixed the limit of indulgence; it has always been so, and it will be so (unless the leopard suddenly changes his spots) to the end of the chapter. It is a very superficial misconception of what has been done, and what we propose to do, to believe that such enactments will work any hardship on the women; on the contrary, their whole intention is eminently benevolent and merciful. We do not wish to undertake anything impracticable, but we desire to benefit the women in the most obvious way; to take hold of the mischief where it presents itself most tangibly. I am enabled, through the courtesy of the principal medical officer of that department, to present the letter below relating to the *distribution of venereal diseases* in the United States Navy.

NAVY DEP'T, BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY, }
August 14th, 1876. }

Sir,—In reply to your communication of the 10th instant, you are informed that the mean strength of the navy for the year ending December, 31, 1873 and 1874, was 12,723 and 13,870 respectively. The total number of syphilitic cases treated in 1873 was 595, and of gonorrhœa 225; in 1874, of syphilis, 561 cases, and of gonorrhœa 156 cases. The Bureau regrets its inability to furnish you the same information for the years 1869, '70, '71, and '72, as it is so scattered through its records that it would require much time and labor to make the compilation. Very respectfully,

J. BEALE, Surgeon General.

Dr. E. T. EASLEY, Little Rock, Ark.

In conclusion, I may be allowed to say that if I have expressed myself decidedly, it is because I have felt so; if plainly, because the subject has appeared to demand it. In the language of Dr. Gross, in an effort worthy of him in this same direction, "my sole aim has been to be truthful, and to interpret the facts as I comprehend them, and as I discern their importance. The path is not a new one. Other men have walked upon its slippery surface, and have shown the world that they were not afraid to encounter its perils."

The appeal is not to the passions of men or to any transitory interests, but to the intelligence of the age, its advancing knowledge, its enlightened benevolence, and if it fails, we who have been heard, and have dissented from a needless waste of life and health, will, at any rate, have left us the consolation of knowing that we have placed upon record our protest.

